

Washington, DC - Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today commented on the United States Library of Congress' unprecedented initiative to bring free online access to many of the world's most significant cultural works to the public. This initiative, the World Digital Library, launched on April 21, 2009, with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

"I congratulate Librarian of Congress James H. Billington on the launch of this phenomenal and enriching online collection," said Fortenberry. "From hosting the letters of Christopher Columbus, timeworn maps of newly-discovered lands, ancient stele and illuminated manuscripts, to drawings of captive slaves of the Amistad and videos of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in 1906, the World Digital Library provides a unique opportunity to peruse the world's greatest treasures. It will also enhance the teaching and learning experiences of educators and students worldwide. I highly encourage visiting the World Digital Collection website."

The World Digital Library is a joint venture between the U.S. Library of Congress and its U.S. partners (the National Archives and Records Administration, Yale University, Brown University, and the John Carter Brown Library) and 28 institutions from 19 countries, including the national libraries of Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Russia, Serbia, and Sweden and two Mexican cultural institutions.

The World Digital Library is freely accessible online at [www.wdl.org](http://www.wdl.org).

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